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CarbonArt

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This text was archived at the Institute for Contemporary Art in Zagreb collection, as part of the **Research project** conceived in 1997 by a SCCAN – Soros Centers for Contemporary Art Network, funded by the Open Society Foundation, New York.

The purpose of the project was to select, collect and disseminate texts on contemporary art practices in the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, around Soros Centers for Contemporary Art, written in and about art of the 1990s. The coordination of the project was carried out by Janka Vukmir, SCCA – Zagreb, today the Institute for Contemporary Art, Zagreb.

We did not intervene in any of texts more than just correcting obvious typos and spelling. On the occasion of collecting texts, we were given permission from all authors, to rightfully use them. If anyone now has different instructions, please, contact us at the info@institute.hr.

All of the texts we have collected at the time have been later published on the website of the I_CAN, International Contemporary Art Network, the short-lived successor of the SCCAN.

On the occasion of the exhibition **90s: Scars**, revisiting the art practices and social and political context of the 1990s in the postcommunist countries, the Institute for Contemporary Art is now reoffering a collection of **89 texts and a comprehensive list of then proposed further readings**, on the website of the Institute for Contemporary Art, www.institute.hr.

The exhibition 90s: Scars is curated by Janka Vukmir and organized by the Institute for Contemporary Art and the MMSU – Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka, on the occasion of the **European Cultural Capital Rijeka 2020**. Originally planned to open May 14, 2020, at the MMSU in Rijeka, due to COVID-19 crisis, is postponed until further notice.

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CarbonART

CARBON (C): a non-metallic chemical element in Group IV of the periodic table. Although widely distributed in nature, carbon is not particularly plentiful (it comprises only about 0.2 percent of the earth's crust); yet it forms more compounds than all the other elements combined. (enc.)

I believe that the ambiguous interpretation of the title of the event organized by SCCA two years consecutively requires a small explanation. Why did I call the camp CarbonART? All printed materials that refer to the event started with a definition of the chemical element Carbon, extracted from the Romanian Encyclopedia. The first and most important thing was the attempt to suggest the artists the idea of directly using the natural environment in their projects. As Carbon is the main components in making other elements, found in nature, I conferred it the significance of the synonymous of nature. Under a different aspect, carbonization explains another camp particularity, namely the ephemerality of realized works. Made under the open sky, they will survive only in documents. After the first CarbonART, held in Sadova, Calarasi, in the summer of 1996 (the first event organized by SCCA Chisinau), in 1997 took place the second CarbonART, this time an international one, with the involvement of two other Centers of Contemporary Art: SCCA Chisinau and SCCA Odesa. CarbonART-97 took place in Radenii Vechi, in a national park. The local artists called it by inertia Sadova II.

Sadova I was conceived as a creative camp for those artists that, in the organizers' opinion, were the opposite of the "official" artistic production. Although among participants were seniors, 80% were young people between 20 and 30 years. The group was formed of persons with most diverse artistic backgrounds: painters, stage designers, photographers, cameramen, fashion designers, ceramists etc. Within this artistic forum, the participants were given (maybe for the first time) the possibility to feel free, when they did not have to follow someone's advice, to take into account the canons and laws studied in schools, which were to be respected in order to make it to an exhibition. The villagers that hovered about the camp were shocked by this liberty, catching the artists in the most unusual situations. The articles published later in the newspapers that appear in the capital and district towns described the event, organized and supported by SCCA, as a shamelessness that took place in the central area of Moldova. The camp was the first artistic event of Republic of Moldova that stressed the new media and forms of expression.

The advantage and, at the same time, the disadvantage of the first meeting in Sadova is, in my opinion, in the poor knowledge of the post-modernist tradition by the local artists. Schooled in art history that ends with the postimpressionists, many of them heard only about the installation, performance, action, etc. We do not intend as well to confer the camp emphatic formula taken from the contemporary art lexicon, pre-eminently focusing on the artistic experiment.

Of all forms of expression, approached at CarbonART 96, I believe the performance was the most exploited. Asked many times why the performance is so popular among the local artists, I find an explanation of this phenomenon in an update of the popular drama (otherwise, brightly coloured and rich in Balkans) in a new formula. In this context, I would give as an example the work *Prayer*, signed by the tandem Sandlon, in which the authors use the bull, an element of our people's calendar customs. I would also notice the projects *The forest's baby* by Iurie Cibotaru or *Giotto* by Alexandru Tinei, *The warm of color* by Pavel Braila, *The lake* by Sadovnokov and Scerbina.

A new *GOELRO plan* is carrying out Mircea Puscas, bringing the electricity to the heart of the secular forest. Trained as a sculptor, he comes to the camp with a set of neon lighting that he uses almost in all his projects: *The mysterious chair, Bonfire, Birth*. The fashion designers Nedelciuc, Dragneva, Macari carry on their job in the forest, wrapping trees (*Allegory* by Dragneva and Macari) or making “group costumes” for the participants (*The costume unites us*, Nedelciuc).

I think the experiment in the summer of 1996 was a success, outlining a group of local artists that at the moment actively take part in diverse local and international artistic events. I want to believe that the camp served as a starting point for the development of visual art in Republic of Moldova. Regretfully, local foundations or institutions did not help launch this kind of events, this was the task of Soros Foundation, that is being charged with importing foreign traditions, especially the Western ones.

I would like to believe in the inauguration of a CarbonART tradition, that will take proportion and will bring together artists from the entire world; in its organizing will lend a helping hand different organization, centers, foundations and competent institutions of this country.